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A Chink in the Armor: The Black-Led Struggle for School Desegregation in Arlington, Virginia, and the End of Massive Resistance

We can lose this fight as we lost our freedoms
during Reconstruction days.
—Meeting flyer on first anniversary of *Brown v. Board*
1955 James Lee School in Falls Church, Virginia

As it had for countless other children in Arlington, Virginia, the idyll days of summer had come to end for eleven-year-old Edward Leslie Hamm Jr. on the morning of 5 September 1957. After donning a pair of clean khaki pants and a freshly pressed, short-sleeved white shirt, Hamm was heading back to the classroom along with twenty-one thousand other students in this Northern Virginia community. That alone was enough to put a pit in any child's stomach. But for Hamm the day possessed an added dimension. Instead of riding a bus for forty-five minutes to the Negro school six miles across the county, his parents were dispatching him, along with two other black pupils, to challenge the continued exclusion of blacks from the all-white school, one mile from their isolated exclusively black neighborhood. A full three years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, not a single black student had yet attended a white public school in Virginia, seen by many observers as the frontline state of resistance to school integration. The three children were nervous and took no comfort in thinking of themselves among a vanguard of the civil

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rights movement. "I wasn't into an integration thing," recalled George Tyrone Nelson, who was fourteen at the time and among the trio challenging the segregated schools that day.¹

At 8:25 A.M., Hamm, Joyce Marie Bailey, thirteen, and Nelson, appeared at Stratford Junior High School, accompanied by Geraldine Davis, one of several white women who were active in the Arlington branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In comparison to the school that the three children had attended, Stratford was a splendid facility set amid nine acres of fields and woods. It had been built at the beginning of the decade, during a local boom in school construction, to serve one of the county's most affluent residential neighborhoods. Although they too lived within walking distance of the school, there was no question that the three young pupils were disturbing the pastoral calm of this setting by introducing the messy struggle for integration.

Word of their impending arrival had made its way through the school. The events in Little Rock had dominated the news for the past several days. By the time the group neared the front entrance, three hundred of the more than one thousand white students who attended Stratford had gathered. Unknown to most, plain-clothed police officers were among the crowd of adults who had also come to witness the procession. The police had been alerted that blacks activists might use the opening day of school to draw attention to Arlington County's refusal to comply with the Supreme Court's edict. The crowd, however, parted without incident. "There was a slight murmur of curiosity as they passed through," reported two journalists who witnessed the scene.²

Davis and the three students entered the school. They walked past the large black binder, hanging by the door that contained all the state's segregation rules, and were immediately escorted to the principal's office, where Claude Richmond awaited them. "I just told them their placement was not made to this school," he said. "Therefore, they could not be admitted." The four left.³

Two of the students returned that day to Hoffman-Boston School, the Negro junior and high school where they had been enrolled the previous year. Hamm, however, returned home, unable to enter any county school. His parents had refused to sign the new pupil placement form because they considered it part of the state's machinery to block desegregation. Hamm, Bailey, and Nelson were not alone in confronting the school authorities that September day.

Elsewhere in the county five other students sought admission to an all-white high school and to two all-white junior high schools and one elementary school. They were all refused.

Meanwhile that same morning, a mile from Stratford, Virginia Attorney General J. Lindsay Almond Jr., who had defended the state before the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board*, was beginning a day of campaigning in Arlington in his bid to become governor. In Clarendon, the heart of Arlington's white commercial district where even the obelisk commemorating Arlington's war dead lists black deaths separately, reporters asked the candidate if he endorsed Senator Harry F. Byrd's policy of "massive resistance" to school desegregation. Almond replied that he preferred a more flexible approach that "evaluates each situation as it arises." His definition of flexibility, however, did not include permitting Arlington blacks to attend white schools. Five years earlier, he had told the Supreme Court that integration "would destroy the public school system of Virginia as we know it today." There was no evidence that his position had changed. The morning after his campaign stop in Arlington, Almond was once again appearing before a federal judge seeking to block the admission of blacks. The judge, however, was growing impatient with Arlington's intransigence.⁴

Indeed, time was running out for segregationists in Virginia. Unknown to Almond, the Hamms, Davis, and other Arlington activists was the significance of the actions taken that day—one in a long series of black-led assaults against school segregation in Arlington. The judicial victory that it would eventually yield eighteen months later would trigger the collapse of the state's policy of massive resistance. "When we started," recalled Dorothy Hamm, looking back on the struggle, "our destination was a few blocks, or at the most, a few miles to the so-called white schools in Arlington. However, the trip covered hundreds of miles and took us almost five years to reach our first stop."⁵

The history of the struggle to integrate Arlington schools between 1954 and 1959 is a critical episode in the defeat of southern opposition to *Brown*. What the black freedom struggle accomplished in this northern Virginia suburb led directly to the end of the most visible, state-sanctioned effort to oppose the Supreme Court's edict. The "Virginia fight," Roy Wilkins, executive director of NAACP, wrote to an Arlingtonian at the end of the five-year period, "may turn out to be (in the history of the overall struggle) the turning point in the Southwide campaign."⁶ This was a major accomplishment for the movement nationally. "Nowhere across the South was

opposition to school integration more keenly felt or vigorously expressed than in the state of Virginia,” concluded historian James W. Ely, a student of the state’s resistance’s efforts.⁷

The Arlington struggle was an important stop in the path taken by those who challenged and, in the end, prevailed over the segregationists. This history of those years also reveals the central role played by blacks, contrary to what most accounts have previously portrayed. For example, the version published by the local history journal lists none of the actions taken by blacks and instead focuses on the white school board and white educational reformers.⁸ As late as 1984, the *Washington Post* still characterized the successful desegregation of Arlington schools as a white-led effort.⁹ Even the most recent new scholarship on massive resistance continues to cloak the activities of black activists.¹⁰

Indeed, while it is true that many whites played important roles in the Arlington fight, it remained first and foremost a black-led movement. “What some of us [whites] did was to be helpers under the leadership and courage of Hamm” and others, recalled Ellen Bozman, a longtime Arlington politician. Portraying it as anything other than a black-led movement is to miss one of the central tenets of the story. The Reverend Sidney Lovett, a white clergyman, recalled the mood in his church in 1956 when he came to serve as pastor of the Rock Springs Congregational Church, a liberal white church in North Arlington. “Laypeople, men and women and children wanted very much to be in support of the kind of leadership being given by the Hamms and other parents,” Lovett said. “If you didn’t have [black leaders] doing their part, I think a lot of us would have washed out.”¹¹

Arlington was also more than a local movement. The struggle in Arlington was a critical component of a nationwide strategy to defeat massive resistance in its birthplace. The NAACP and its local branches, which comprised the primary civil rights organization in Virginia in the 1940s and 1950s, decided after *Brown* not to bring its fight to the sectors of the state with black majority populations where the famed Byrd political machine and its policy of massive resistance were strongest. Instead, it consciously selected to attack the chinks in the Byrd armor, those portions of the state where blacks were in a decided minority and integration would not pose a potent enough threat to fuel strong opposition.

Thus in the end, Stratford—Hamm’s neighborhood school that eventually became the first white public school in Virginia to admit

black students—would become the breach in the ramparts of massive resistance upon which much of the old South had pinned its hopes.¹²

Segregation and education had been inseparable concepts for white Virginians since they were forced to free their slaves in 1865. "In the realm of public education," wrote Virginia historian Charles Wynes, "the Negro was early made to know that whatever education he got at public expense must be obtained in segregated schools."¹³ Segregation in all matters of life followed when Jim Crow laws were adopted in Virginia, as in the rest of the South, by the turn of the century.¹⁴

In this respect, Arlington was no different from the rest of the state. Blacks lived in three well-defined sections of Arlington. The principal black neighborhood was in South Arlington adjacent to the Army-Navy Country Club, the largest expanse of greenery in the county aside from Arlington National Cemetery. The Hamms lived in a smaller black community, located in North Arlington close to Lee Highway, one of the main thoroughfares across the county. Known as Hall's Hill, the neighborhood traced its origins back to the end of the Civil War when Captain Basil Hall sold building lots to his emancipated slaves. In the building boom that followed World War II, the isolated neighborhood found itself ringed by white developments and apartment buildings. At one end of the neighborhood, whites built a continuous brick and concrete block fence, which still stands today, to prevent any advancement of "colored people."¹⁵ The neighborhood's streets remained poorly paved and the county's sidewalk building program purposely avoided the neighborhood.

The Hamms bought a lot in Hall's Hill in 1945, when E. Leslie Hamm, twenty-three, was discharged from the Army. Hamm and his wife, Dorothy, were unable, like many blacks at the time, to obtain a mortgage, so the couple designed and built their own house. To pay for the materials, which they bought over a period of five years, Dorothy Hamm worked first as a seamstress and then in a succession of federal government jobs, where E. Leslie Hamm had also found employment. In 1950, they moved into their completed two-story brick house. Within the neighborhood, life for the Hamms's children was much like that of any child in America; bicycle riding, basketball, and hanging out. Beyond the enclave's confines, how-

ever, segregated Virginia was inescapable. The only playground open to black children had a few pieces of old play equipment and was too small for even a pick-up game of baseball. E. Leslie Hamm said that one particular aspect of segregation prompted him and his wife to begin what would be a long career of civil rights activism. Along Lee Highway was a field where children could ride ponies in a little ring. The Hamm boys asked frequently if they could go someday. "Every time we went past it in the car I would make some excuse." E. Leslie Hamm recalled. "There wasn't time, or there were too many people waiting, anything but the truth about what they couldn't do because of their color. It was making a liar out of me, and I knew that one day my sons would realize it."¹⁶

The Hamms were part of a larger wave of migration into Arlington in the years following the war. The twenty-four-square-mile county, which had once been part of the District of Columbia, lay just across the Potomac and made an ideal place for the growing ranks of federal employees to build homes. In a few years the sleepy, small-town-like setting was transformed into a middle-class suburb. The old residents—what one author called "authentic Virginians"—were displaced by hordes of white moderate civil servants from every state in the union.¹⁷

As these young white families began to have children, their attention turned to the inadequate and inferior school system. The county, as in all southern locales, maintained two school systems. The Arlington white schools were, at best, mediocre. The Negro schools were run down. Most parents, black and white, who sought a good education for their children enrolled them in the District of Columbia public schools. But in 1946, the District announced that it would begin to charge tuition and restrict enrollment.

So the white newcomers to Arlington flexed their political muscle and banded together under the name Arlingtons for a Better County (ABC). Their first target was the conservative school board. Members of the board were selected by a circuitous route. A county circuit court judge who, in turn, was appointed by the legislature in Richmond appointed a three-person school electoral trustee board. After a petition drive that garnered more than five thousand signatures, the legislature was convinced in 1946 to grant Arlington the right to be the only community in Virginia to have an elected school board. In November 1947, ABC candidates won all five seats on the board. The old school board members, comprised of the former county leadership, refused to vacate their seats, prompting a year-long court

struggle. Finally in October 1948, Virginia's highest court declared the elected board the legitimate one. The new board, dominated by liberal civil servants and professionals, immediately set to work re-vamping the school system from top to bottom. Bond issues were submitted to, and approved by, the voters. A flurry of school construction was soon under way. Teacher salaries were raised and textbook salesmen came away with big orders.¹⁸

Many black Arlingtonians were enthusiastic about the new board. The Arlington branch of the NAACP had participated in selecting the ABC candidates for the board and, in turn, the new board sought to improve the Negro schools.¹⁹ At the same time, however, the black community was not planning on depending solely on white largess and began taking its own actions to improve the schools. Although the black community was small, comprising only five percent of the county's population, the civil rights movement had a strong presence in Arlington. Eight years earlier, on 15 September 1940, seventy-one blacks in Arlington had established their own branch of the NAACP. Within a year of its founding, the Arlington branch began to push school authorities to upgrade the Negro junior and senior high school so that it could be accredited.²⁰

By April 1941, the efforts resulted in a meeting with the school board and superintendent, Fletcher Kemp. Esther Cooper, Emma Clifford, and two other parents, seated in the front right-hand rows of seats reserved for members of the "colored race," formally requested that the county provide black students with accredited junior and high schools.²¹ In June, Cooper and five parents again repeated their request in a meeting with Kemp. This time Leon A. Ransom, a NAACP lawyer, accompanied them. The meetings apparently produced no results because over the summer the Arlington NAACP branch began collecting the names of black property owners who had paid the poll tax and would be willing to let Ransom file suit on their behalf to force the county to upgrade the schools.

Support for legal action was not forthcoming from black parents. This was probably because their children could still attend accredited schools in the District of Columbia. But five years later, in 1946, the dire condition of the Arlington Negro schools once again surfaced as an issue when Washington closed its schools to outsiders. At a December 1946 meeting, the Citizens Committee for School Improvement, as they called themselves, gathered, signed, and mailed letters written by Emma Clifford to state education officials in Richmond. The state officials replied that it was a local matter. In Janu-

ary 1947, Cooper and Lillian M. Thompson visited Hoffman-Boston, the Negro high and middle school, anticipating enrolling their children, who would now no longer be able to attend school in Washington.²² They discovered that their children would not be able to continue their course in business studies because while Hoffman-Boston had a typing instructor it had no typewriters. The following Sunday afternoon, the Citizens Committee, now growing in number, met again with Ransom. This time Ransom began work on a suit.²³

Before going to court, Ransom appeared one more time before the school board. In great detail, he explained the specifics of the plight of nine or ten children who faced problems similar to those facing Cooper's and Thompson's children. He asked the board what they intended to do. The board members said they would reply in ten days. That weekend, Cooper spoke at Mt. Olive Church and Thompson at Macedonia Church, spreading the word about the planned case and raising money. Ransom's appearance before the board, the creation of a committee of parents, and the church talks attracted the attention of both leading black newspapers, such as the Washington *Afro-American* and Pittsburgh *Courier*, as well as the local white weekly, the *Arlington Sun*.²⁴

One person who spotted an article in the *Sun* was Barbara Marx, a white Pennsylvanian who had moved to Arlington with her husband in 1943. A Quaker and the mother of two girls in Arlington schools, Marx was disturbed by the racism she found in northern Virginia. Her children had come home from school reporting that their new friends used words like "nigger." This shocked their mother, who wanted so much to bring her children up in a racially harmonious world that she had instructed them, when completing forms that required disclosing their race, to put instead "member of the human race."²⁵ Marx contacted the committee and offered to help. Then she called Lucy Bussey, a member of the school board, in support of the black parents. She received a cool reception. Bussey told Marx that per capita spending on black children already exceeded that for whites and, besides, the pupils could enroll in a regional school in Manassas (twenty miles away) if the Arlington schools were not good enough.²⁶ The telephone call was the first step Marx took in supporting black parents and children and would culminate a decade later when she became the only white plaintiff in the suit that ended segregation in Arlington.

In September 1947, two months before the first school board election, a lawsuit was filed on behalf of Constance Carter, a fif-

teen-year-old black girl who claimed she was unable to take Civics II, Spanish, or physical education at Hoffman-Boston School for Negroes. The suit demanded that she be given equal educational opportunities with white students or be admitted to the county's white high school.²⁷

Ransom's suit was assigned to Alexandria federal Judge Albert V. Bryan. A native of Alexandria and a graduate of the University of Virginia law school, Bryan had just been appointed to the federal bench by President Harry Truman.²⁸ He dismissed the suit. "The evidence," he said, "does not make out a case of discrimination."²⁹

While the evidence did not convince Bryan, the process of assembling it and documenting the specific differences between the white and Negro schools galvanized the black community. The Arlington parents appealed Bryan's decision. Coming to their aid were two NAACP attorneys, Spottswood Robinson and Oliver Hill, both Howard Law School graduates, who were then appearing before school boards throughout the state to challenge the unequal conditions in Negro schools. "When they were rebuffed, as they almost always were, they filed lawsuits—dozens of them," wrote historian Richard Kluger.³⁰ Robinson and Hill were at the center of the national NAACP efforts, even though they operated out of their own law firm in Richmond. They traveled to New York frequently and participated regularly in strategy meetings at the NAACP headquarters. As a result, the national office of the NAACP began taking a greater interest in Virginia. Earlier that year, Thurgood Marshall, legal counsel for the NAACP, announced that the heat was going to be turned up in the Old Dominion state and that no fewer than 124 separate school districts would hear from an NAACP attorney.³¹ In Arlington, their efforts paid off. In June 1950, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ordered Arlington to provide equal facilities for blacks at Hoffman-Boston school.³²

Arlington black parents, however, continued to assault the separation of the races. Several times in the late 1940s, black parents sought permission to enroll their children in Washington-Lee High School, into which the new elected board was pouring money. The struggle was under the leadership of women. For example, in 1951, Esther Cooper chaired the Arlington NAACP branch and Lillian Thompson chaired the Education Committee. The committee had five women and only two male members.³³ By 1954, blacks in Arlington had made some gains in obtaining improvements for the existing Negro schools. They were also aware that the improvements

were the result of their efforts, not those of the newly elected school board, which was spending money right and left on the white schools.

Although the gains were significant, especially the 1950 court order and the establishment of an equal pay scale for 50 black and 776 white teachers, black families still knew their school system remained second rate at best.³⁴ Evelyn Syphax, a teacher in a Negro elementary school, recalled that "the schools were practically crumbling around us." The books continued to be hand-me-downs from the white schools and there was never enough equipment. "Separate but equal did not exist," she said.³⁵ Test scores reinforce her recollection. On every measure, black children in third through eighth grade tested lower than white children, in some cases 50 percent lower.³⁶

Members of the Arlington NAACP branch pinned their hopes on the possibility that a victory was imminent in their goal of opening the white schools to blacks. In March 1952, for instance, Robinson wrote to James E. Browne, president of the Arlington NAACP branch, that he could not lend any more help in pursuing Arlington cases because the new strategy was to seek nonsegregated schools rather than equal and separate ones. "A favorable decision on this issue by the Supreme Court in any of the cases will, of course, necessarily win for us the Arlington case," wrote Robinson. Instead he urged that work begin on developing a community atmosphere conducive to the eventual elimination of racial segregation.³⁷

"Any Monday now," wrote Browne in a membership pitch letter in late 1953, "the U.S. Supreme Court may hand down its decision on the five school segregation cases. We are, of course, hoping that the justices will not duck the main issue again and that this time they will outlaw segregation."³⁸ On 17 May 1954, the victory came. At 12:52 P.M., in a clear, unemotional tone, Chief Justice Earl Warren began reading the court's unanimous opinion in *Brown v. Board* to a packed chamber in the Supreme Court, seven miles from Arlington. By 1:20 P.M., the nation's wire services were telegraphing the news that school children could no longer be segregated by race.³⁹

In Arlington, the decision raised great hopes among the activists. "To many of us this decision meant that finally our children could attend the schools closest to their home, and this is what they expected to do," recalled Dorothy Hamm years later.⁴⁰ Marx, who was now Supervisor of the Seventh District NAACP, wrote to members, "We have for years waited and hoped for a decision banning segregation in public schools. We must now go to work in our com-

munities to see that desegregation is effected as smoothly, happily and speedily as possible.”⁴¹ A meeting was set for early June to map out a strategy.

Official reaction, on the other hand, was muted at first. But within three weeks, white politicians from “Southside” Virginia, adjacent to north-central North Carolina along the coastal plain of south-central Virginia, persuaded sixty-one county school boards to support segregated schools. No other part of Virginia had been so afflicted by the race problem. In 1831, Nat Turner began his insurrection there. And, most recently, one of its school boards, that of Prince Edward County, had been part of the cursed Supreme Court decision. With blacks comprising 49.5 percent of the population, according to the 1950 census, Southside whites feared for their way of life. “There would have been no hard, unyielding core of massive resistance in Virginia if there were no Southside,” wrote Senator Harry Byrd biographer J. Harvie Wilkinson. “Virginia as a whole was opposed to racial mixing in the public schools, but outside the Southside the state evinced more of a willingness to face reality.”⁴²

On 25 June, Governor Thomas B. Stanley joined their ranks, declaring: “I shall use every legal means at my command to continue segregated schools in Virginia.”⁴³ One of those means was to appoint a thirty-two-member all-white commission led by State Senator Garland Gray to study the problems raised by the court’s decision. Attorney General Almond added his opinion that the provisions in the Virginia Constitution and state laws providing for segregated schools were still in force. The Virginia Department of Education dispatched an order to all school boards that any plans to integrate white and Negro schools be delayed until the High Court issued its promised implementation decision.

In Arlington, the school board’s operating plan was also to study the situation. It appointed a committee on 12 June to examine the problems involved in integrating the school system. Elizabeth Campbell, a white liberal, was given charge of the committee, which, unlike the state committee, would include at various times seven or eight blacks among its twenty-nine members. The NAACP also had some presence on the committee. Geraldine Davis, Edith Burton, and Mary Shirley, members of the Arlington NAACP branch, were appointed. The committee’s three tasks were to study the state actions, to issue a fact sheet on integration to calm citizens, and to prepare a statement for Campbell to present to the Gray Commission in November.⁴⁴ The committee soon began a long process of

study. Ignored was the example of Arlington's Catholic schools. Within months of the 1954 decision, the church integrated its parochial schools in Arlington with no public outcry, disorders, or even withdrawals of students.⁴⁵

The NAACP also set up its own integration committee for the seventh district, which also included neighboring Fairfax County and the City of Alexandria. Its first decision was to publish a newsletter. "It is our hope," wrote Marx, "that our respective communities will get new ideas and be stimulated to move faster toward integration by reading what their neighbors in Northern Virginia are doing."⁴⁶ Marx also devised the idea of working through as many "front groups" as possible so as to maximize the community pressure of the NAACP, according to an internal NAACP memorandum. It was her contention that the county would more readily accept school integration if was advanced by "many indigenous groups, rather than 'someone up in New York.'"⁴⁷

Mary Ellen "Nell" Henderson, a teacher in a black school near Arlington, an active member and wife of E. B. Henderson, president of the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP, was given the task in September of providing NAACP members with steps they could each pursue. The idea was to encourage an "easy transition from the mores of a passing era to a future status of acceptance and good will between people of varying races and creeds." Specifically, the committee recommended that integration literature be widely distributed, especially among whites; that teachers be invited to meet in study groups to learn practices that will make for a better transition; and encourage Parent-Teacher Associations (which remained segregated) to take charge of monitoring the mingling of races in schools. Admitting that it was aware political roadblocks remained, Henderson also urged that NAACP members try to pressure the Gray Committee to "encourage liberal consideration of plans to de-segregate."⁴⁸ Marx herself followed up on one of the recommended steps. She wrote to clergymen in northern Virginia urging them to make their influence felt. "While Governor Stanley is even considering methods to circumvent the manifest purpose of the Court, Clergy dare not be silent about man's duty of compliance with law and brotherhood."⁴⁹

The Gray Commission, whose hearings dominated the news, however, was setting the agenda in Richmond. Gray was a prominent member of the Byrd organization, a leader in the Fourth Congressional District in the heart of Southside, and a potential candidate

for governor. The Gray Commission hearings became *the* forum for debate on the issue. In November, Campbell was one of about one hundred who testified during the fourteen-hour hearing attended by two thousand. Reading from a statement approved by her committee, she urged that public education be maintained and that compulsory attendance laws not be altered; that officials act calmly; that local school boards be given maximum latitude in selecting methods to carry out the Supreme Court decree; and that the commission's recommendations be consistent with the final orders yet to come from the court.⁵⁰

On 31 May 1955, the Supreme Court issued its follow-up ruling. It ordered that school authorities to exhibit "good faith compliance" with *Brown v. Board* "at the earliest practical date." On 4 June, NAACP officials held a "Regional Emergency Conference" in Atlanta. "It is the job of our branches to see to it that each school board begins to deal with the problems of providing nondiscriminatory education," read the directive sent to Arlington branch. To that end, the directive laid out seven steps for the branch to follow:

- File a petition at once with the school board, urging it to comply with the court and offer assistance in reaching that goal.
- Follow the petition with regular inquiries.
- During the summer use every opportunity to explain to the public the meaning of *Brown II*.
- Organize parents so that they are familiar with lawsuits before such suits are initiated.
- Seek the support of individuals and community groups, particularly in the white community.
- When the school board adopts a plan, obtain the exact text and rush it to the national office.
- If no plans are announced or steps taken by the time school opens in the fall, "the time for a lawsuit has arrived."⁵¹

The Arlington chapter followed the instructions dutifully. A petition was presented to the board, which was ignored.⁵² The Education Committee redoubled its publicity efforts. The branch watched carefully the deliberation of the school board's study committee. The tasks invigorated the membership, which had now grown to 285 dues-paying members. In fact, by 1955 Virginia had more NAACP members than any other southern state. Of the 22,000 Virginia members, 1,054 were in Seventh District Branches.⁵³

The Gray Commission continued to hold hearings for an entire year. On 11 November 1955, it submitted its report to the governor. It had crafted a segregationist policy couched in language that avoided defiant words. "The underlying philosophy was not outright opposition to integration but a series of flexible devices to make sure that no white child would *have* to go to an integrated school," explained William H. Hessler, a journalist who covered the Arlington struggle for the national magazine *The Reporter*.⁵⁴ The commission proposed a series of measures that stressed local control of student placement, assuming boards would oppose allowing black and white children to intermix. If that plan failed, the commission proposed the state have the power to close any school that chose to integrate. The state would pay private schools tuition for white families affected by the school closing. The Gray Commission proposals to alter the state's constitution required action by the General Assembly. The debate revealed that the only weakness in the segregationists ranks was among the few legislators from northern Virginia.⁵⁵ It was soon agreed to put a referendum for a limited constitutional convention before voters on 9 January 1956. The referendum battle was short but fiery. By a margin of two to one, voters supported the Gray Commission. In Southside, the margin was four to one. Arlington, however, did not support the referendum, voting 10,306 to 8,001 against the convention. "This dissent," wrote historians Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis, "primarily from urban areas and northern Virginia's Washington, D.C., suburbs, was countered by the growth of the aggressively prosegregation Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, with its base of power in the heavily black Southside region of the state."⁵⁶ The winning margin also came from a belief among many voters that the Gray plan was a moderate alternative. Its endorsement by voters, however, was immediately used by the Byrd organization as a mandate for massive resistance.⁵⁷

Events moved quickly. On 12 January, three days after the referendum, the Arlington school board committee met for the last time. The chairman of the School Board, Dr. E. R. Draheim, called the group, which was named the "Committee to Study Problems of Integration in the Arlington Public Schools," to order. Only sixteen of the twenty-nine members were in attendance. The only black member present was George Richardson, principal of Hoffman-Boston. Draheim told the committee members that their task was to prepare "a statement of policy to be issued by the Arlington School

Board preliminary to announcement of plans for proposing a bond issue." The board, he said, interpreted the Gray Commission recommendations and the state referendum vote earlier that week "to mean that no child in Virginia shall be forced to attend a school in which children of both the white and Negro races are enrolled" and that Arlington "will comply with any action taken by the State Legislature."⁵⁸

Draheim's comments reflected the central concern of the committee and board members, who gathered in the conference room of the school administration building that evening. The future of the school system, rather than the welfare of its black students, was on their minds. Only five percent of the student body was black. Studies, which had been made public, showed that there were sixty black students who currently lived in a white school district. At best, a maximum of fifteen of Arlington's thirty-five white schools would be affected by desegregation. "I hardly believe that a single Negro child among 200 white children will do damage to Arlington school standards," Warren Cox, the previous chairman of the school board, said the year before the meeting. But there was a growing concern among ABC members, who had worked hard and long to build the school system, that it could become a casualty in the state's racial struggle. "The real problem in Arlington is not integration, but the preservation of our public school system," Cox said.⁵⁹

"We must make a policy statement on integration at this time as we cannot go to the people on the important issue of school construction bonds without a statement on integration," Superintendent T. Edward Rutter, who had succeeded Kemp, told the committee.⁶⁰ Without much discussion, the committee approved a plan that would permit integration in a few elementary schools in the fall, several junior high schools the following year and one senior high school in the 1958. Most important, however, the statement "explained that a child would be assigned to a non-integrated school if his parents objected to attending a school in which children of both races are enrolled."⁶¹

In other words, after eighteen months of study, the committee was proposing the minimum possible integration to assure its New York bond counsel that the district was complying with the law of the land on the eve of a referendum for a \$9.5 million bond.⁶² Over the years this vote has come to be regarded in local history as the moment when Arlington took a principled stand. As recently as 1996, for instance, Campbell told a commemorative meeting, "I take great

pride in the fact that the Arlington School Board never wanted anything except integration."⁶³ However, a more accurate depiction of the board's attitude would have to include the testimony Campbell and others presented in defense of school system's separate facility in the Carter case only a few years earlier.⁶⁴

Writer Hessler tried to explain the attitude he discovered in Arlington to his *Reporter* readers around the country. "Traditionalists in Mobile and Atlanta and earnest liberals in New York and Cleveland may find it hard to believe, but to most people in Arlington, desegregation is not an issue of principle. It is a nuisance." Arlington is willing to have some integration, if that was what the courts order, or retain segregation, if that was what the state demanded, he wrote. "If they have a policy for this crisis, it is to keep their heads down until the firing stops."⁶⁵

Unfortunately the looming bond issue required some action. So two days after the committee's recommendation, the School Board met in open session at the John Mercer Langston School, named for the black Virginian who was the general inspector of the Freedmen's Bureau during Reconstruction.⁶⁶ With eighty persons in the audience and many reporters watching, the board approved a policy on integration essentially unchanged from that approved by its committee. A tortured three-paragraph preamble to its new policy revealed how much the board was torn in its wish to obey the Supreme Court while not violating the wishes of the state.⁶⁷

As with any effort to serve two masters, Arlington's efforts caused both to be unhappy. The same day as the board adopted its new policy, the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP President E. B. Henderson wrote to Spottswood Robinson in Richmond. A basketball coach at the Negro Dunbar High School in Washington, Henderson had become an activist in 1917 when his town council sought to move and consolidate 113 black families into a colored district. From that fight had grown the Falls Church and Vicinity branch of the NAACP, the first rural branch of the organization.⁶⁸ The main purpose of the new policy related to the bond issue, not to desegregation, Henderson wrote Robinson. "The proposed plan is a triple school system with no enforced integration. . . . Many of us think this is a very small beginning and that the reason for postponing integration in the junior and senior high school is purely political, to facilitate passage of the bond issue." Plans for a suit should proceed, he concluded.⁶⁹

The decision made the front page of the *Richmond Times-Leader* on two successive days, alarming state leaders. "I read with much

concern that the Arlington County School Board is making plans for integration this coming year," Senator Gray told a reporter. Arlington officials repeatedly tried to downplay their act. "This school board and administration," said Rutter, "is going to do precisely what the state of Virginia tells us to do."⁷⁰ On 1 February, State Delegate Frank P. Moncure, of nearby Stafford county, introduced legislation to strip Arlington of its right to have an elected board. Thirty-seven legislators signed onto the bill and within three weeks the Election Committee met to consider his proposal. Five hundred spectators filled the Virginia House chambers to capacity, where the hearing had been moved because of the crowd. The mood was certainly not in favor of Arlington. Proponents of the legislation wore Confederate lapel pins and seven of the thirteen committee members had proclaimed themselves in favor of the bill even before hearing a single witness.⁷¹

"It is clear," James Stockard, a member of the school board, told the lawmakers, "that we in Arlington have misunderstood what the state had in its mind and that the state may have misunderstood what we have done." He reiterated the portion of the policy preamble that promised nothing would be done that was not in compliance with the wishes of the legislature. For example, he said, the board had steadily refused to accede to Arlington NAACP's petition for integration and would continue to do so. The only reason the policy had been announced was so that bonds could be sold in a "settled atmosphere."⁷² Following the hearing on the Moncure bill, the president of the Arlington County PTA tried to convince the General Assembly that they were misinterpreting Arlington's decision. "We have been assured by the members of the school board," Lightsey wrote to the lawmakers, "that no program of integration will be initiated in Arlington until a state-wide policy and program have been developed by the General Assembly."⁷³

It made no impression on the lawmakers. Eighteen days later they took away Arlington's elected board and replaced it with one appointed by the more conservative county board. The Arlington action revealed that local option was a potentially disastrous flaw in the Gray approach. For the segregationists this had been a wake-up call and it brought to the fore a formidable weapon. Senator Harry Flood Byrd joined the fray and gave the movement its name. "If we can organize the Southern States for massive resistance to this order, I think that in time the rest of country will realize that racial integration is not going to be accepted in the South."⁷⁴

Byrd had for years been the boss of a political machine that stretched from county courthouse cliques to the offices of Virginia's congressional delegation. In the late 1940s, this remarkable organization had shown signs of weakening. It found in "massive resistance not only the opportunity to 'protect' the Commonwealth's white children but also a chance to refurbish its faltering machine," wrote Andrew Buni, who traced the role of blacks in Virginia politics during the first half of this century.⁷⁵ The basis of Byrd's power was found among whites in Southside Virginia.

Thus as the second anniversary of *Brown* approached in the spring of 1956, Arlington blacks were no nearer to gaining entrance to the excellent white schools that ABC had provided the county. Not only had the county electorate lost direct popular control of the school board but also the state was firmly in the hands of segregationist forces. The Arlington struggle was no longer a local matter, if it ever had been. Any modicum of integration anywhere in Virginia had to be stopped. "There is no middle ground, no compromise," said Bill Tuck, a congressman from the Southside. "If you ever let them integrate anywhere the whole state will be integrated in a short time."⁷⁶

The South had certainly slowed the tide. The rate of school districts desegregating dropped precipitously, falling to only a few each year. "All over the South the lights of reason and tolerance and moderation began to go out under the resistance demand of conformity," wrote historian C. Vann Woodward.⁷⁷ Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, a racist organization formed by sheriffs, clerks, and legislators in Southside in 1954, had quadrupled its number of chapters. It now had twelve thousand members in sixty chapters, including one in Arlington.⁷⁸

Arlington was certainly not immune to this sense that the resistance had gained the upper hand. Even seemingly progressive organizations were standing on the sidelines. Barbara Marx, for instance, resigned from the ABC council because of its refusal to support compulsory integration. "By this time we realized there would be numerous road blocks in our way," recalled Dorothy Hamm, "but we had been preparing for them."⁷⁹ That spring Thurgood Marshall traveled to Virginia several times to meet with Hill, Robinson, and others to work out a plan, according to Robinson's monthly reports. Including Arlington, "four school units continue ready for litigation," Robinson reported.⁸⁰ On 17 May 1956, the NAACP made its move in Arlington. Attorney Edwin C. Brown, now NAACP coun-

sel for northern Virginia, brought suit against the Arlington school board. Similar suits were filed in Norfolk, Newport News, Charlottesville, and Front Royal in nearby Warren County.

That night, Michigan Congressman Charles Diggs came to Arlington and spoke at an anniversary observance of *Brown*, held in the Langston school and sponsored by the NAACP. "Certainly we should be realistic to recognize that desegregation is an uneven, shifting process," Diggs told the integrated crowd. "This has obviously been acknowledged here in Virginia by the NAACP or suits would have been filed simultaneously with the decision to force compliance in every school district."⁸¹

The NAACP selected four Virginia localities in which to force the federal judiciary to bring about compliance with *Brown*. The four shared certain traits. They were areas in which blacks comprised a small minority, in which the Byrd machine was weak, and where the public held ambiguous feelings about integration. Benjamin Muse, a columnist and a white moderate on the side of desegregation, wrote an open letter to the NAACP in 1956 urging that Charlottesville and Arlington be targeted before even returning to Prince Edward County. This debate went on within the NAACP. From Alexandria, Edith Hussey, editor-in-chief of the *Candle*, the publication of the state conference of the NAACP, wrote to Clarence Mitchell in the New York office at the suggestion of Barbara Marx. "The NAACP can win each legal battle and yet lose the war if it fails to take psychological factors into consideration," wrote Hussey. "So let me join my plea to Mrs. Marx's, that we concentrate on the cases already showing signs of good desegregation to come and even open up new cases in mountain areas where the dual system is especially uneconomic—and keep out of Virginia's Black Belt for the present. Our eventual success there will be more certain after successes in these areas."⁸²

The Arlington case was named *Clarissa S. Thompson et al. v. the County School Board of Arlington* because the daughter of Ethel Thompson, who had been active in the NAACP since 1947, led the list of complainants. "When my mother asked me if I wanted to be in the desegregation case, I didn't really want to," recalled Clarissa Thompson, twenty-eight years later. "I said 'all right, I will,' because I knew that someone had to do it, someone had to go up front."⁸³

The suit was unusual because both black and white children claimed they were discriminated against by segregation. Two white families had included their children in the suit. One of them, how-

ever, dropped out within two weeks. "We are withdrawing our names because of the extremely adverse psychological effect the foul and vicious telephone calls have had on our family," said Lucille Orndorff.⁸⁴ Barbara Marx, the other white parent who had joined the suit, had also received threatening calls. But she chose to stick it out. Marx, who had met her late husband in Nazi Germany, was not going to be swayed by harassers. "If you go in for something of this sort you are not going to let a few crackpots scare you out of it," she said.⁸⁵ The New York office of the NAACP called on President Eisenhower's Attorney General, Herbert Brownell, to investigate the harassment. Federal officials sent two FBI agents from Richmond to determine if any federal laws had been violated. After interviewing the Orndorff and Marx families, the agents left Arlington and nothing came of the investigation. Marx was rewarded for her stand later that year when the Virginia Conference of the NAACP elected her to its executive board, making her the first white named to the sixteen-member board. She, along with Geraldine Davis, who accompanied the students to Stratford in 1957, remained a stalwart ally of Arlington's black community. Davis had also been the recipient of abusive phone calls. Her solution had been to bury the phone in a pillow in the laundry hamper at night.⁸⁶ The Hamms were listed on the suit, as well as Edward Strothers, the newly elected president of the Hoffman-Boston High School PTA, whose daughter Edna was in tenth grade. "I'd rather have my daughter stay where she is," he said, "and if I saw everything at Hoffman-Boston like they have at Wakefield and Washington-Lee [the two white high schools], I'd be satisfied. But I want my daughter to have everything that anybody else's daughter has."⁸⁷

The atmosphere in Judge Bryan's court had changed considerably since Arlington blacks had first come before him in 1947 with the Carter case. Since then, Bryan's opinion on school segregation had been directly overturned by the Supreme Court. It was he who had written the three-judge opinion in the Prince Edward case, which became one of the four cases that the high court included in *Brown v. Board*. Racial segregation, Bryan had written four years earlier, had caused no hurt or harm to either race and was not based upon prejudice.⁸⁸

Although Bryan now seemed willing to follow the high court's lead on segregation matters, Arlington officials certainly were not prepared to do so. Wesley Cooper, chairman of the county board, predicted that the court would not grant the petitioners any relief. "If Mr. Brown [NAACP lawyer] would just get out of town we could

solve this much more easily and quickly,” said Cooper.⁸⁹ To represent it in the case, the school board selected Frank L. Ball, a former state senator, and James H. Simmonds, who had provided counsel to the board before on this matter. Attorney General Almond sought an extension in order to assist the board.

On 31 July 1956, after hearing oral arguments the day before, Bryan ordered that the schools be integrated, beginning with the elementary schools. He also issued an injunction restraining the Arlington school district from refusing to admit a student on account of race or color, if they were otherwise qualified for admittance.⁹⁰ The Arlington branch of the NAACP was jubilant. “Did you exclaim ‘It’s high time!’ when you heard Judge Bryan’s school desegregation decision?” wrote its president, Thomas Monroe.⁹¹ A more careful examination of Bryan’s ruling, however, revealed a major flaw. The injunction lacked teeth. It held that complaints alleging violations of the injunction would have to show that the student had exhausted all possible other administrative channels before coming back to court. This decision played right into the hands of the segregationists, who, that summer in Richmond, were concocting a Pupil Placement Act that took away from school boards the power to assign children to school and instead placed it in the hands of a state board to be appointed by the governor.

From the point of view of the NAACP, the Pupil Placement Act was a devilishly clever ruse. Signed pupil placement forms had to be reviewed and processed and then sent back to the local school before the pupil could be enrolled. In other words, black students could be bureaucratically denied a place, but if they did not pursue this avenue, Judge Bryan would not consider a complaint. Further, the act stipulated that if there was any incident of integration in any school, whether court ordered or voluntary, the state would cut off funds for schools in the district. The state appealed Bryan’s decision to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, creating further delays.⁹² When Arlington schools opened in the fall of 1956, black children were again no closer to entering a white school. That winter, the NAACP brought suits in Newport News and Norfolk against the constitutionality of the placement act. Federal Judge Walter H. Hoffman accepted the NAACP argument, but again the case was appealed by the state and no decision was likely until October 1957 at the earliest.

“We were caught at a stoplight,” recalled Dorothy Hamm. “We waited at this stoplight for a year and no decision had been made. Finally a few students, some who were not plaintiffs in the suit, de-

cided to ignore the light and apply for admission on their own.”⁹³ On 5 September 1957, the three students, including Dorothy Hamm’s son, staged their challenge. Upon being refused, Brown immediately returned to Bryan’s court. Attorney General Almond, now a candidate for governor, rushed back to the Alexandria courtroom. Hamm, Davis, and others who participated in the events of six days before came face to face with Almond. Particularly galling to him were the actions of Geraldine Davis. On the witness stand, Davis sought to explain to the court that she felt this was an opportunity for whites to show they were Christians, but Almond continually cut her off. But she embellished each answer to his questions in a way to get her point across. She told the packed courtroom that she decided to accompany the children after reading about threats of bloodshed if they showed up at Stratford. “I thought if there was any bloodshed that it should be white blood and mine if necessary,” Davis said.⁹⁴

Almond’s efforts at restraining Davis or persuading the court were to no avail. On 14 September, Bryan handed down his strongest ruling to date. It ordered that the following Monday the Arlington School Board admit seven of the eight black students who were refused admittance on opening day. Among the children were Edward Leslie Hamm and George Nelson, who had tried to enter Stratford (Joyce Bailey was not listed in the suit). To calm fears, Bryan noted that his injunction would affect the school district only slightly. “Into a white school population of 21,345, only seven colored children will enter; one colored child will be with 11,431 white children in elementary grades, and no more than 6 colored children among the 9,824 white high school students,” he wrote.⁹⁵ Victory for the Arlington NAACP was approaching, but ever so slowly. “It is hard to imagine anything more gradual,” said Hamm, “than the rate of seven Negro children to 21,000 white.”⁹⁶ But even this small victory was thwarted as once again the state and school board launched another series of appeals that postponed the day of reckoning. That fall, the Arlington families watched as the state elected their courtroom nemesis, J. Lindsay Almond, governor.

When 1958 arrived, still nowhere in Virginia was a black student attending a white public school. But NAACP members knew that the state was running out of legal options. In fact, according to the Virginia NAACP newsletter, “The Candle,” the task ahead was to help Almond come to terms with the facts. “[B]y keeping the legal victories coming,” wrote the editorial writer, “there is no place ‘within the framework of law’ [Almond’s own words] for him to go but forward.”⁹⁷

The time was approaching when the state would have to use its ultimate weapon, closing schools. This threat, however, would turn out to be the undoing of massive resistance. Hill and others certainly realized this. "If the schools have to be closed to bring Virginia to its senses," he said, "then the sooner we reach that crisis the better."⁹⁸ The threat of school closings alarmed Arlingtonians, who considered their schools their most valuable community asset. This recklessness of massive resistance now created a new set of opponents in urban areas.⁹⁹

On 1 May, the Arlington Committee to Preserve Public Schools was formed. The first two tenets of its platform explained its purpose:

1. We are determined to pursue every legal means to keep public schools open.
2. We are here concerned neither with perpetuating segregation in schools nor hastening integration.¹⁰⁰

Although it stated that it welcomed "participation from all Arlington citizens who agree with our objectives," membership was restricted solely to whites. On 12 June, six hundred attended a meeting in the Trinity Presbyterian Church. Each person attending was required to sign a form that he or she subscribed to the principles of the committee. O. Glenn Stahl, who began the effort, was elected president. Within another week, the committee had more than one thousand members. Twenty-six of the thirty-nine white PTAs in Arlington voted to support the committee, as did churches, the League of Women Voters, and other white organizations. By summer's end membership in the Arlington spawned committee reached three thousand in the country itself and maybe as high as twenty thousand in the state.¹⁰¹ Former school board members such as Campbell and Cox and former county board members such as Wesley Cooper also joined.

Stahl traveled to Richmond and met with Governor Almond, but the meeting produced nothing. Stahl's committee, however, continued to grow, changing its name to the Virginia Committee for Public Schools and becoming a statewide organization. Muse and other anti-Byrd figures joined the committee.¹⁰² "This movement is providing a rallying point for that great body of moderate Virginians that is determined that our fine system of public education comes through the present crisis with as little damage as possible," William

M. Lightsey, an Arlington politician and the committee's executive secretary, later told a Richmond meeting. Lightsey also came to claim that Governor Almond confided to him that the work of the committee had resulted in his about-face on massive resistance.¹⁰³ Certainly that was an overstatement. But the committee did signal that an increasing number of Virginians would rather pay the price of some integration than lose their quality schools.

As autumn approached, moderate Virginians found only cause for fear while segregation forces gained intellectual ammunition on the editorial pages of the *Richmond News-Leader*, where James J. Kilpatrick held forth. "No more ideal spokesman for the view of the [Byrd] organization could be found," wrote Wilkinson. "In a stream of books and editorials Kilpatrick articulated the case for the southern segregationist."¹⁰⁴ In Arlington, an anti-integration organization called the Tenth District Education Corporation distributed a Kilpatrick column in early summer. In it, Kilpatrick said the state should move promptly to close Fillmore Elementary School in Arlington if a single Negro were admitted. "If Negroes insist upon an action that will close Fillmore, then whites may counter-move with an action that would close Kemper [a Negro school]—pawn for pawn, knight for knight."¹⁰⁵ The Defenders, headed by a white Arlington plumber named Jack Rathbone, opened the George Mason Grammar and Academic High School to accommodate white students should the Arlington schools be closed. It was, however, unlikely that many parents took this effort seriously, as the sign outside the school spelled the word "Grammar" as "Grammer." The clergy also took action. Twenty-eight white pastors, representing the Arlington Council of Churches, wrote to Governor Almond to let him know that their churches would not be used for alternative schools to circumvent desegregation.

The increased pressure also affected the black parents trying to win admission to the white schools. "Some Negro parents may have doubts about sending their children to white schools this September because it will result in closing all schools," Marx reported to attorney Hill. "It may be desirable to show them that the schools may not be closed for long."¹⁰⁶

"As the summer of 1958 wore on, with the usual resort to mountains, seashore and local fishing haunts, there was an ominous silence on the subject of the desegregation crisis in most of Virginia," wrote Muse.¹⁰⁷ The silence, however, was only among whites. At the Virginia NAACP convention, the seven Arlington black chil-

dren, whom Judge Bryan had ordered admitted to a white school, were treated as special guests as Barbara Marx took them around the hall.¹⁰⁸ It was becoming apparent to many observers that in Alexandria, Arlington, Norfolk, Charlottesville, and Warren County massive resistance would meet its first real test when the final court orders were issued. In Arlington, the sentiment against Byrd, Almond, and massive resistance was growing. The conservative chairman of the county board admitted publicly that his constituents preferred integration to closing schools.¹⁰⁹

That summer, while the legal machinery continued to move at a snail's pace, twenty-two Arlington black students, seeking transfers to white schools, traversed a bizarre gauntlet by submitting themselves to the interviews by state and local officials. On 8 August, the State Pupil Placement Board requested to interview all black applicants to white schools, including those listed in Bryan's 1957 order. At first, NAACP attorneys wanted to boycott the interviews because they regarded the Pupil Placement law as unconstitutional. However, the Arlington School Board announced that it would use the interviews to make their own determinations. The attorneys agreed to submit the youngsters to the interviews, from which lawyers were barred, because a judge in the Charlottesville case had ruled that a claim of discrimination could not be lodged until pupils first went through this process. On 18 August, the state placement board set up shop in the Arlington Trust Company building. Its members interviewed twenty-eight of the applicants (several did not show). Before coming in for the interview, the students met together in the Eldridge home, whose son had been ordered admitted to the fourth grade. At the Trust Building, the first parents to be interviewed by the board recorded the questions and supplied them to the parents waiting in the hall. "We were really together and we knew what was going on," recalled Dorothy Hamm.¹¹⁰ The transcripts of the interviews reveal the parents were indeed prepared to uniformly challenge one particular question that was asked identically during each interview by B. S. Hilton of the Pupil Placement Board.

Mr. Hilton: Is this application so far as you are concerned, for transfer, being made solely to enforce the so-called constitutional right?

Mr. Costley: There you are saying so-called constitutional rights. I do not understand the meaning of that so-called constitutional right. . . .

What so-called constitutional right you mean, because we are colored we do not have any constitutional right?

(later)

Mrs. Hamm: I do not quite understand what you mean by "so-called." . . .

(later)

Mr. Hamm: There is the "so-called" again. I do not know what you call it, but so far as I am concerned it is a law.¹¹¹

The following week, the state board rejected all the applications, as well as those made in Newport News. The Arlington School Board also rejected the applications.¹¹²

NAACP attorneys again went back to Judge Bryan. This time they sought to include all thirty students in his 1957 desegregation order. Bryan, however, was on vacation in Europe and would not be able to take up the matter until 2 September. When he returned, Bryan gave his approval for opening Arlington schools on a segregated basis while he considered this new petition. He listened as the school board told him that it had examined all thirty Negro applications and found grounds other than race to reject them all. Barnard Joy, who had served on the school board for nearly eleven years, cited a variety of criteria, including psychological instability and adaptability to new situations, overcrowding at the white high school, and the academic records of the black students.¹¹³

On 17 September, Bryan issued his order.¹¹⁴ The pupil placement plan was not discriminatory in and of itself, he said. Twenty-six of the thirty students, including five whom he had ordered admitted in 1957, would not be allowed to transfer to a white school. Instead, he found that the plan unfairly denied the transfer of four seventh graders who lived in North Arlington and possessed test scores above the median of Stratford, where they would be admitted. The criterion in the case of the four was solely that of "adaptability." The four were Ronald Deskins, Michael Jones, Lance Newman, and Gloria Thompson, sister of Clarissa, whose name was on the original lawsuit. Edward Leslie Hamm, who twelve months earlier had courageously marched into Stratford, was not among them.¹¹⁵

Bryan delayed the effective date of his order until January because the fall semester had already started. Officials in Arlington breathed a sigh of relief. The delay had the effect of getting Arlington out of the conflict for a few months. Governor Almond had

closed schools in Norfolk, Charlottesville, and in Warren County after judges ordered black students admitted in those districts. In effect, the delay meant that Arlington would not have to begin desegregation and face school closings until after state and federal courts had an opportunity to rule on the constitutionality of the massive-resistance laws.

That fall the Arlington NAACP branch prepared, at long last, for the implementation of Bryan's order. Marx came up with the idea of organizing workshops to prepare parents and supportive white parents held secret social events so that the four black children could meet white Stratford students. A group of ninety black and white students were formed into a social group known as "United Us" that brought parents and children from North and South Arlington together in churches.¹¹⁶

In December, Tenth District Congressman Joel T. Broyhill asked for a meeting with the parents of the four children whom Judge Bryan had ordered be admitted to Stratford. The parents agreed to meet with the Republican but selected attorney Frank Reeves to act as their spokesman. Broyhill asked the four to delay sending their children to the white school until September of the following year. According to Audrey Newman, in whose house the meeting was held, Frank Reeves replied by asking the congressman that if the parents consented to wait, would Broyhill guarantee that every child in Virginia would be able to attend the school of his choice? Broyhill became furious and said he could not do that and the meeting ended.¹¹⁷ Ronald Deskins, one of the four children, said he also recalled Broyhill making "allusions to the fact that my father worked for Arlington County and this could have an impact."¹¹⁸

On 19 January 1959, when the state was celebrating the birthday of Robert E. Lee, Virginia's Supreme Court struck down the school-closing laws, the principal weapon of the massive resistance, on the basis that it violated guarantees of public education contained in the state constitution.¹¹⁹ "It's a sad day, Governor," said the clerk who delivered the first copy to Governor Almond.¹²⁰ Later that day a three-judge federal panel in Norfolk added its opinion. It declared that all school-closing statutes enacted in 1956 and 1958 were in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. Instead of giving up, however, Governor Almond told the state in a radio and television address the next night that "we have just begun to fight."¹²¹

In Arlington, all sides were nervous. "I shall not try to predict Gov. Almond's next steps," Marx said in speech a day later. "Some

consider that his inflammatory speech was an invitation to fanatics to create disorder so that he may prevent desegregation by use of his police power," she wrote.¹²² Judge Bryan's court was in session almost every day dealing with motion after motion. At one moment, the Arlington school board attorney asked the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals to stop Bryan. Attorney Ball argued, according to Marx, "that love is essential in school and that white teachers would not be able to love these colored youngsters."¹²³ The judges were apparently not impressed. "It is clear that the transfers were denied on the basis of race," they replied.¹²⁴ Bryan did order another delay in his order, but this time only until 2 February 1959.

On Sunday, 25 January, Almond called for a special assembly to meet in three days. With only five days left before four black students were scheduled to enter a white Arlington school, legislators gathered with anticipation, believing that Almond would provide them with a plan for action. To their great shock and chagrin, Almond said the fight was over and that Virginia must abide by the law of the land. In the aftermath of his speech, only the most rabid segregationists did not understand that the fight was lost. In Arlington, the Defenders gave Stratford students a letter as they left school that Friday. "You, as a student at Stratford Junior High School, and your parents have been placed on a great battlefield—perhaps the greatest one our nation has ever faced," the letter read. It further urged that students ask their parents "to let you do your part to preserve *your* Constitution, *your* race and *your* white culture by taking your books home and continuing your studies there until the emergency has passed."¹²⁵

At 8:30 A.M., Monday, 2 February 1959, Marx arrived at the Hamms's house in Hall's Hill. Excitedly the fathers of the four chosen children burst into the Hamm house a few minutes after Marx arrived. They had just dropped them off behind the school. Under the watch of half of the 170-man Arlington police force, the students had quickly walked down the sidewalk and into the school, where they were met by Principal Richmond, who had turned away the other students two years earlier. At 8:45 A.M., when the school bells rang to announce the beginning of classes, Stratford became the first school in Virginia to desegregate. Fifteen minutes later, Norfolk schools opened the doors of its white schools to black students.

At the Hamm house, the group consumed bacon, eggs, hot rolls, and coffee as the phone rang nonstop. Marx, Hamm, the three fathers, and Lillian Thompson could no longer stand being absent from

the school on this momentous day. They all piled into Marx's car. As they approached Stratford, the police made them park several blocks away. When they walked up the street, reporters swarmed them. They dodged into a friend's house, via the back door, where they had more coffee and looked out through her front window at the school and the police and reporters milling around.

In the afternoon, Marx and Hamm managed to circle the school a few times by car. Hamm "was sad because she had not brought her camera to snap the police in their riot squad regalia," said Marx. Later, with a public relations man from the New York office of the NAACP in tow, the pair went to the Lance Newman's house, where the children were eating potato chips and drinking sodas and recounting the day's adventure. An impromptu press conference with the children was held on the porch of the house. As the day came to a close, Marx took Hamm home, stopping at a drugstore to purchase the evening papers. The next day, two thousand miles away on a business trip, O. Glenn Stahl would wake to find a picture of Stratford on the front page of the newspapers in Caracas. "It was a day of excitement and happiness in Hall's Hill," said Marx. "There was a lot of laughter and chattering by old and young."¹²⁶

The introduction of four black students into one white school was certainly not an end of a struggle for black Arlingtonians. It was only one chapter in a long struggle that did not come to a legal end until 1971, when the school board adopted a court-approved, unitary nonracial pupil placement system. The year after the four black students were admitted to Stratford, the number of black students admitted to white schools in Arlington grew to forty-two, including, this time, young Hamm. Arlington again was ahead of the rest the state by having the distinction of being the Virginia district with the most black students attending formerly all-white schools. Life for these students was certainly not easy. Most missed their friends and confronted racist students, teachers, and administrators each day in their new school. One black student, for example, discovered a crudely made racist figurine in his desk on his first day of school.¹²⁷ In June 1960, Barbara Harrison and Hamm were about to become the first black students to graduate from Stratford. Dorothy Hamm was called to principal Richmond's office. "I was asked that the two students not attend the prom because they would only be dancing with each other." The two did not attend.¹²⁸

Although it was hard for the first children, it was, in the end, the black parents who had risked the most and endured the greater abuse. "Our parents and the other adults who were involved at that time, that were pushing, these were really the people who were taking chances," Deskins said. "Because these were the people who had homes, these were the people who had substantial investments that they could lose. These were the people who took chances. We were just kids."¹²⁹

Both sides of the struggle gathered different lessons from what happened in Arlington. Anthony Lewis, then a reporter and not yet a columnist for the *New York Times*, called on editors across the South on the eve of Stratford's desegregation to gauge what they had learned from the Arlington experience. He found that they concluded the following:

- It has demonstrated the futility of head-on resistance to superior federal force.
- It has warned the entire South that the only way to avoid at least token integration is to abandon all public schools—a terrible alternative.
- It has dampened the enthusiasm of some members of state legislatures for new and extreme measures against school integration.
- It has taken some of the pressure off officials who had led less-resistant areas toward compliance with the Supreme Court decision.¹³⁰

His interpretation was a tad optimistic.

The desegregation pattern formed by the struggle in Arlington contained two elements that mirrored what would become the experience in school districts throughout the South. First, integration would be a one-way street. Blacks would be permitted to attend previously all-white schools and would be expected to avail themselves of that opportunity, but the reverse was not anticipated. None of the committees or study sessions considered that whites should attend the black schools, even though it could be argued—with some measure of truth—that the Arlington Negro schools in the 1950s were in some areas equal to the white ones. Second, from the start of these discussions, it was clear that integration could, and would in the end, mean the closing of black schools, centerpieces of the close-knit and virtually enclosed black neighborhood of Arlington.

David Cecelski, who chronicled a fight to keep black schools open in Hyde County, North Carolina, wrote: "School desegregation was a remarkable and pivotally important accomplishment for the civil rights movement, but it did not merge black and white schools so much as obliterate black schools."¹³¹ In the case that he detailed in his book, as in countless southern communities, school authorities aimed to close the black schools because of racism. In Virginia, another set of reasons might have been at work.

The NAACP, following *Brown*, recognized that Virginia was a critical test in the fight to desegregate schools in the South. To beat massive resistance, the Virginia NAACP shaped a strategy to strike first where the Byrd machine was weak and where the black population was minuscule. The plan worked. Arlington, Alexandria, Norfolk, and Charlottesville cracked the united front of resistance. "In Arlington, Alexandria, and Norfolk, there simply was not the slightest community will to resist," Kilpatrick wrote to a friend two weeks after Arlington fell. Had the battle been fought in the black belt, it would have received "the almost universal support of the white population, as later events in Prince Edward and Surry counties would prove," noted Ely.¹³²

From a tactical point of view, the strategy made eminent sense. But it also contained a tragic flaw in that it lent credence to the idea that integration was a one-way street. This might not have been the case if desegregation had occurred where the black and white school populations were about equal. In Arlington, where only one in twenty students were black, the community was more than willing to accept the few black pupils that did not live close to the white schools. The much-touted peaceful integration of the Arlington schools ended up setting a pattern duplicated elsewhere in the state. By the time desegregation reached counties where black populations were in the majority, this pattern became the *modus operandi* for the white boards.

Thus, in order to win over the state, the black freedom struggle unwittingly surrendered its schools and sowed the seeds for the later "failures" of desegregation. This was by no means the movement's fault. The result, however, is that the most central role of education—arbitrating who succeeds in society—was preserved in favor of whites. While it is true that the children of Prince Edward County no longer used decrepit outhouses, the fundamental factors preventing their likely success in society remained unaltered.¹³³

Segregated schools were not the source of the inequality; rather, they were emblematic of it. Segregating blacks was a weapon in sub-

jugating their race, just as segregating whites was a means of ensuring their power. But accommodating an end to segregation did not mean that white society had to renounce its power entirely. In fact, by making the debate focus on legal and quantitative segregation, and not social inequalities, the main elements of white racial pre-eminence were untouched. Racial separateness alone could not account for the disparity between the races. "Few, if any, of the factors that have an impact on educational achievement are governed by 'legal rights' or are readily translatable into an issue of 'racial discrimination,'" wrote Stephen C. Halpern in his work *On the Limits of Law*.¹³⁴ The source of this disparity was, and remains, considerably beyond the reach of law.

In the end, however, it is only the wisdom of hindsight that offers such insights into the long-run results of the Arlington struggle. The victory it won is undeniable; the cost was unforeseen. On that September morning in 1957, when Dorothy Hamm entrusted her son to her friend Geraldine Davis, she was seeking racial justice. Contrary to the portrayal of that era preserved by many in Arlington, the wall of racial separateness fell because black parents such as Hamm pushed for it. In 1996, Arlington held a commemoration of Stratford's integration in 1959 at the school, since renamed H-B Woodlawn School. Sitting on the stage was Dorothy Hamm, along with two of the students, Michael Jones and Ronald Deskins, Evelyn Syphax, who had been their teacher, and Elizabeth Campbell, James Stockard, and O. Glenn Stahl. "For the first time in almost forty years," exclaimed Hamm, "it is nice to be with the panelists in a schoolroom instead of a courtroom."¹³⁵

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Notes

1. "Our Struggle for Equality: A Live Review of School Integration in Arlington, Virginia, 25 years ago," presented by the Drama Club of the Calloway United Methodist Church, Arlington, 1984. The gathering included reminiscences by most of the major participants in the 1940s and 1950s fight. A videotape may be found in the Virginia Room, Arlington Public Library, Arlington. Many of the textural details in the narrative of this article come from a broad range of sources and are only cited when they are historically significant. For example, the clothing Leslie Hamm wore on opening day of school was determined by examining photographs appearing in the local newspapers.

2. Paul Sampson and Connie Feeley, "Negro Pupils Turned Down in Arlington," *Washington Post*, 6 September 1957, A1 and A17. The calmer mood of the crowd, in comparison to Little Rock, was probably because the post-World War II exodus of federal government workers from Washington into Arlington had melled the racial hostility in the suburb. "Violence was much less a factor in Virginia than in Mississippi or Alabama, and a less stifling climate of intimidation faced black activists as well as white liberals and moderates," Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis. *The Moderates' Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia*, ed. Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis (Charlottesville, 1998), 5.

3. "Negro Pupils Turned Down in Arlington," *Washington Post*, 6 September 1957, A17. The information about the placement of the state's segregation rules comes from remarks made Evelyn Reid Syphax at a panel discussion commemorating school desegregation at H-B Woodlawn School, Arlington, on 15 February 1996. Syphax was, for many years, a teacher in both Negro and integrated Arlington schools. Arlington Educational Television made a videotape of the panel discussion, "Arlington's Fight for Educational Equality," a copy of which is available at the Arlington Public Library.

4. *Washington Post*, 6 September 1957, A20. Almond's comment on *Brown* is taken from James W. Ely, *The Crisis of Conservative Virginia: The Byrd Organization and the Politics of Massive Resistance* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1976), 4.

5. "Our Struggle for Equality."

6. Roy Wilkins to Bob Robertson, 18 February 1959, NAACP Archives, III, A106. Library of Congress. Washington, D.C. Parenthetical remarks are as in original.

7. Ely, v.

8. Cecelia Michelotti, "Arlington School Desegregation: A History," *The Arlington Historical Magazine*, 8, no. 4 (October 1988): 5-19.

9. John Mintz and Nancy Scannell, "Arlington Officials Worked Hard to Achieve Peaceful Desegregation," *Washington Post*, 2 February 1984, A13. All three photographs featured in the article were of white Arlingtonians, and the text did not quote any of the black activists who had worked for desegregation. The only black person quoted in the article was Evelyn Reid Syphax.

10. Since first researching this article, a wonderful collection of articles was collected by Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis (cited earlier), and it provides new insights into the fight against massive resistance. Several of the articles are cited below, but the focus of this article precludes their mention in the text.

In their introduction, they suggest that to understand the demise of massive resistance "requires a broader examination of Virginia's political culture, of disagreements among white southerners over social and educational priorities, and of stories of individuals and local communities." *The Moderates' Dilemma*, 2. It is the latter point that this article seeks to accomplish. On the other hand, the publica-

tion of this collection on whites of articles focused on whites continues the "invisibility of black actors."

11. "Our Struggle for Equality."

12. The use of the word "ramparts" was inspired by a comment made by James J. Kilpatrick, the apologist of massive resistance. He wrote about a feeling that brought southerners together after *Brown v. Board*. "All of us stand figuratively on the ramparts together, facing a common foe; and for the first time in years, we enjoy that wonderful camaraderie of brothers in arms." Quoted in Joseph J. Thorndike, "The Sometimes Sordid Level of Race and Segregation: James J. Kilpatrick and the Virginia Campaign Against *Brown*," *The Moderates' Dilemma*, 63.

13. Charles E. Wynes, *Race Relations in Virginia, 1870–1902* (Charlottesville, 1961), 147.

14. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 2d rev. ed. (New York, 1966), 97.

15. *Washington Post*, 27 February 1963, F1.

16. *Ibid.*

17. William H. Hessler, "A Southern County Waits for the School Bell," *The Reporter*, 4 September 1958, 21.

18. Hessler, "A Southern County Waits for the School Bell," 21. *The Washington Post*, 31 October 1993, and issues of the *Washington Post* and the *Washington Star*, 1947.

19. The information about the NAACP's participation in the selection of candidates is found in the Papers of Barbara Marx, Local NAACP Activity Files, Virginia Room, Arlington County Library, Arlington.

20. The chronology of events in the 1940s, as well as other information about the early activities of the NAACP bearing on schools in Arlington, is drawn from a manuscript, "NAACP School Activities," contained in Barbara Marx's papers. Based on a comparison of the writing with items Marx signed and the fact that she is mentioned in the short history, it is unlikely she wrote this work. More likely, it is something that she obtained when she became an officer in the NAACP. In addition, information about the branch's founding may be found in the membership files of the NAACP Archives, Library of Congress. Washington, D.C.

21. The Arlington School Board, in accordance with state codes, segregated seating at its meetings. Before the law was repealed, many white and black NAACP members purposely violated the seating plans.

22. Hoffman-Boston was a secondary school, meaning that it combined in one facility what would now be a middle school and high school.

23. "NAACP School Activities."

24. *Ibid.* See issues of the *Washington Afro-American*, *Pittsburgh Courier*, and *Arlington Sun* in January and February 1947.

25. "Our Struggle for Equality."

26. Per capita expenses for 1948–49 were \$199.52 for a black pupil at Hoffman-Boston and \$133.64 for a white pupil in one of the two high schools. *Washington Star*, 12 September 1957. NAACP School Activities, 2. The figures are deceiving because the county lost all economies of scale by maintaining a separate, small school system for its black pupils. The Manassas high school was a regional high school for black pupils.

27. *Washington Post*, 10 September 1949. Lassister and Lewis make the point that many districts in the South equalized funding as a means to forestall desegregation. This was not the case in Arlington, as the necessity of the lawsuit demonstrates.

28. *Northern Virginia Sun*, 2 September 1958, 1.

29. Opinion of the Court. *Constance Carter v. School Board of Arlington County*. Case File 331. General Case Files; United States District Court for Eastern Vir-

ginia (Alexandria); Records of the District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives and Records Administration—Mid-Atlantic Region (Philadelphia).

30. Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York, 1975), 473.

31. *Ibid.*, 473. This focus on Virginia continued following 1954. The NAACP filed more school desegregation suits in Virginia than in any other state.

32. Opinion of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. 6064. 31 May 1950. National Archives and Records Administration—Mid-Atlantic Region (Philadelphia).

33. The role of women in the civil rights movement is fully explored in Lynne Olson, *Freedom's Daughters: The Unsung Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement from 1830 to 1970* (New York, 2001).

34. "Facts Concerning Segregation and Integration," November 1954, published by the Arlington School Board Committee to Study Problems of Integration of the Arlington Schools. Campbell Papers.

35. "Arlington's Fight for Educational Equality"

36. Superintendent T. Edward Rutter to Elizabeth Campbell, undated 1955. Elizabeth Campbell Papers, Virginia Room, Arlington County Library, Arlington.

37. Spottswood Robinson to James E. Brown, 18 April 1952, Marx Papers, 18-2-1-1. Robinson was among the NAACP leaders who pushed early for trying to overturn *Plessy v. Ferguson* and seek to have the courts declare segregation unconstitutional. See, for instance, Juan Williams, *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* (New York, 1998), 196. In addition, Kluger points to the development of social science literature as having played a role in the altered strategy. Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 314.

38. Letter to potential NAACP supporters, undated but sent in 1953. Marx Papers, 18-1-1-13.

39. Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 708.

40. "Arlington's Fight for Educational Equality." In 1996, Hamm said of Brown, "It's something that we felt should have been done years prior to that, but when that decision came out, it gave us the impetus to move ahead." *Washington Post*, 4 February 1996, C5.

41. Marx to members of Seventh District, 1 June 1954. Marx Papers: Local NAACP Activity Files.

42. J. Harvie Wilkinson, *Harry Byrd and the Changing Face of Virginia Politics, 1945–1966* (Charlottesville, 1968), 120. In addition, Ronald L. Heinemann, *Harry Byrd of Virginia* (Charlottesville, 1996), contains considerable material on the senator's role in crafting the state's policy of massive resistance.

43. Benjamin Muse, *Virginia's Massive Resistance* (Bloomington, 1961), 7.

44. Instructions are contained in Campbell papers.

45. Hessler, "A Southern County Waits for the School Bell," 21.

46. Marx to branch presidents, 19 October 1954, Marx Papers, Local NAACP Activity Files.

47. Jesse Devore to Henry Lee Moon, 3 February 1959. NAACP: J5. Devore was dispatched to Arlington in 1959 to handle public relations and other matters on behalf of the national office.

48. Henderson to NAACP members, Marx Papers, Local NAACP Activities Files.

49. Marx to Clergymen, November 1954, Marx Papers, Local NAACP Activity Files.

50. *Richmond Time-Leader*, 15 November 1954, 4; "Facts Concerning Segregation and Integration," November 1954. Campbell Papers. Davis, who also testified briefly, pointed out that Gray thanked all the witnesses except for those who were black.

51. "Directive to the Branches," adopted at Regional Emergency Conference, Atlanta, 4 June 1955. Marx Papers, Local NAACP Activities Files.

52. Petition to the School Board of Arlington County, 28 July 1955. Exhibit. *Clarissa S. Thompson v. County School Board of Arlington County*. Case file 1341. General Case Files; United States District Court for Eastern Virginia (Alexandria); Records of the District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives and Records Administration—Mid-Atlantic Region (Philadelphia).

53. Figures are drawn from membership rolls in the NAACP archives and from issues of "The Candle," Virginia NAACP's newsletter. District Seven, in which Marx was active, had more than thirty dues-paying whites and four whites on the executive board. "The Candle," May 1957.

54. Hessler, "A Southern County Waits for the School Bell," 22.

55. When the Gray plan went before the General Assembly, only Armistead Boothe and a select few delegates from northern Virginia opposed it. Arlington Delegate Kathryn Stone, the only woman in the Assembly at the time, opposed not only the Gray plan but segregation. Her voice was a lone one. See J. Douglas Smith "When Reason Collides with Prejudice": Armistead Lloyd Boothe and the Politics of Moderation," in Lassiter and Lewis, *The Moderates' Dilemma*, 22–50, for an excellent account of the few dissenters. See Robbins Ladew Gates, *The Making of Massive Resistance: Virginia's Politics of Public School Desegregation, 1954–1956* (Chapel Hill, 1964), for more information.

56. Lassiter and Lewis, *The Moderates' Dilemma*, 6.

57. See Ronald L. Heinemann, *Harry Byrd of Virginia* (Charlottesville, 1996). Heinemann's account of Byrd's role in massive resistance is the most complete yet published.

58. Minutes of the Committee to Study Problems of Integration in the Arlington Public Schools, 1.

59. Cox speaking at Fall Roundup of Arlington Public Schools Advisory Committees, 15 September 1955. Accounts of the speech are contained in Marx papers.

60. Minutes, 2.

61. Minutes, 1.

62. An interview with an anonymous New York bond counsel appeared in the *Washington Star*, 15 January 1956, 1.

63. "Arlington's Fight for Educational Equality."

64. Trial transcript. *Constance Carter v. School Board of Arlington County*. Record of *Constance Carter v. School Board of Arlington County*. Minutes, 2.

65. Hessler, "A Southern County Waits for the School Bell," 21.

66. Langston also helped organize Howard University's law school, served in Congress, and was a diplomatic envoy.

67. Minutes, 2.

68. *Washington Post*, 6 June 1996, Va. 2. E.B. Henderson was a man of many accomplishments, including writing one of the first books on black Americans in sports. He was a dominant figure in Virginia NAACP history. An anecdote is told about his wit and ability to remain cool. When testifying before a state committee seeking to curtail NAACP activities in the 1950s, Henderson was asked what race he was.

He replied, with a twinkle in his eye: "One of my great-grandfathers was an Indian. My father's father was Portuguese, and my mother's father was one of the highly respected white citizens of Williamsburg, VA. Her mother was this gentleman's slave. Now, which race do you suggest that I subscribe to?"

The committee was silent, and he was asked no further questions. (*Washington Post*, 6 June 1996, Va.2)

69. Henderson to Robinson, 14 January 1956. NAACP archives, III, A106.

70. *Washington Post*, 15 January 1956, 1.
71. *Richmond Times-Leader*, 10 February 1950, 1.
72. *Washington Post*, 10 February 1956, 30.
73. William Lightsey to General Assembly members, 5 February 1956. Barbara Marx Papers.
74. Wilkinson, *Harry Byrd*, 113.
75. Andrew Buni, *The Negro in Virginia Politics, 1902–1965* (Charlottesville, 1967), 165.
76. Wilkinson, *Harry Byrd*, 119.
77. Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 167, 160–61, 165.
78. Wilkinson, *Harry Byrd*, 120–21.
79. “Our Struggle for Equality”
80. NAACP Archives, III: J5.
81. An account of speech is contained in Marx Papers: Local NAACP Activity Files.
82. Hussey to Mitchell, 11 November 1957. NAACP Archives, III: A106. Hussey referred to this discussion, in a later letter, as “tactical not a moral matter.” Hussey to Mitchell, 1 April 1958.
83. “Our Struggle for Equality.” Identity of Clarissa Thompson’s family furnished by Dorothy Hamm, interview with author.
84. *Washington Star*, 4 June 1956.
85. *Ibid.* The information about Marx’s husband was provided by her daughter Claire Marx, “Our Struggle for Equality.”
86. “Our Struggle for Equality.”
87. *Washington Star*, 18 May 1956.
88. Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 506.
89. *Washington Post*, 18 May 1956, 3.
90. Order granting an injunction, contained in Civil Action 1341.
91. Letter to members, 11 August 1956. Marx papers, Local NAACP Activities Files.
92. United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, No. 7303. The case was combined with *School Board of the City of Charlottesville and Fendal R. Ellis, Division Superintendent of the Schools of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia v. Doris Marie Allen, et al.*
93. “Our Struggle for Equality.”
94. Trial Proceedings, *Clarissa Thompson, et al v. County School Board of Arlington County*, 11 September 1957, 310–12; *Washington Afro-American*, 17 September 1957.
95. Finding of Fact and Conclusions of Law, 14 September 1957. The decision was also reproduced in its entirety in the *Washington Afro-American*, 17 September 1957.
96. “Our Struggle for Equality.”
97. “The Candle,” December 1957, 2.
98. *Washington Star*, 18 September 1957.
99. See discussion in Lassiter and Lewis, 3.
100. Advertisement in *Northern Virginia Sun*, June 2, 1958.
101. Ely, 78; Advertisement in the *Northern Virginia Sun*, June 2, 1958.
102. See James H. Hershman Jr., “Massive Resistance Meets Its Match: The Emergence of a Pro-Public School Majority,” in Lassiter and Lewis, *The Moderates’ Dilemma*, 104–33.
103. “Arlington School Desegregation,” 9.
104. Wilkinson, *Harry Byrd*, 127.
105. James J. Kilpatrick, “Preparing for the Storm,” *Richmond News Leader*, 23 May 1956.

106. Marx to Hill, 12 March 1958, Marx papers, Local NAACP Activities File.
107. Muse, *Virginia's Massive Resistance*, 58.
108. Barbara Marx to W. Lester Banks, undated, but during the summer of 1958. Marx Papers.
109. *Northern Virginia Sun*, 28 September 1958.
110. "Our Struggle for Equality."
111. Plaintiff' exhibit 1. Trial proceedings, *Clarissa Thompson et al. v. County School Board of Arlington County*. 3 September 1958.
112. *Northern Virginia Sun*, 9–18 August 1956.
113. *Ibid.*, 3 September 1958, 1. Trial proceedings, *Clarissa Thompson et al. v. County School Board of Arlington County*. 3 September 1958.
114. Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law, 17 September 1958. *Clarissa Thompson et al. v. County School Board of Arlington County*.
115. Order, 20 September 1958. *Clarissa Thompson et al. v. County School Board of Arlington County*.
116. Hamm, interview with author.
117. "Our Struggle for Equality."
118. Ronald Deskins, "Arlington's Fight for Desegregation."
119. Section 129 of the Virginia Constitution contained a guarantee of a public school system. The court determined that cutting off funding to schools and creating private school tuition grants violated that guarantee.
120. Muse, *Virginia's Massive Resistance*, 123.
121. *Ibid.*, 126.
122. Draft of speech contained in Marx Papers.
123. Marx speech.
124. United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, No. 7776. *E. Leslie Hamm, Jr., et al. v. County School Board of Arlington County and County School Board of Arlington Count v. Ronald Deskins et al.*, 5.
125. Letter to Stratford students, Marx papers, Local NAACP Activities Files.
126. This account of the day's activities is drawn from notes made by Marx at the end of the day on 2 February 1959. Marx Papers, and confirmed in an interview with Dorothy Hamm.
127. Hamm, interview with author.
128. "Arlington's Fight for Educational Equality" and interview with Hamm.
129. "Our Struggle for Equality."
130. Anthony Lewis, "Virginia Viewed as Turning Point," *New York Times*, 1 February 1959, 1 and 45.
131. David S. Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina, and the Fate of Black Schools in the South* (Chapel Hill, 1994), 57.
132. Kilpatrick to William J. Simmons, 19 February 1959, quoted in Ely, 75.
133. See, in particular, Amy E. Murrell, "The 'Impossible' Prince Edward Case: The Endurance of Resistance in a Southside County, 1959–64," in Lassister and Lewis, *The Moderates' Dilemma*, 134–67.
134. Stephen C. Halpern, *On the Limits of the Law: The Ironic Legacy of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act* (Baltimore, 1995), 12.
135. "Arlington's Fight for Educational Equality."